



# FEDERAL PREPAREDNESS CIRCULAR

## Federal Emergency Management Agency

### Washington, D.C. 20472

FPC 67

April 30, 2001

**TO:** HEADS OF FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

**SUBJECT:** ACQUISITION OF ALTERNATE FACILITIES FOR CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS (COOP).

1. **PURPOSE.** This Federal Preparedness Circular (FPC) provides guidance to Federal Executive Branch departments and agencies for use in acquiring alternate facilities to support their COOP. COOP planning facilitates the performance of department/agency essential functions during any emergency or situation that may disrupt normal operations. This document is designed to be a supplement to FPC 65, Federal Executive Branch Continuity of Operations (COOP), dated July 26, 1999.
2. **APPLICABILITY.** The provisions of this FPC are applicable to all Federal Executive Branch departments, agencies, and independent organizations (collectively, agencies).
3. **AUTHORITIES.**
  - a. The National Security Act of 1947, dated July 26, 1947, as amended.
  - b. Executive Order (EO) 12148, Federal Emergency Management, dated July 20, 1979, as amended.
  - c. EO 12472, Assignment of National Security and Emergency Preparedness Telecommunications Functions, dated April 3, 1984.
  - d. EO 12656, Assignment of Emergency Preparedness Responsibilities, dated November 18, 1988, as amended.
  - e. Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) 67, Enduring Constitutional Government and Continuity of Government Operations, dated October 21, 1998.
4. **REFERENCES.**
  - a. PDD 62, Protection Against Unconventional Threats to the Homeland and Americans Overseas, dated May 22, 1998.
  - b. PDD 63, Critical Infrastructure Protection (CIP), dated May 22, 1998.

- c. Federal Preparedness Circular (FPC) 60, Continuity of the Executive Branch of the Federal Government at the Headquarters Level During National Security Emergencies, dated November 20, 1990.
  - d. FPC 65, Federal Executive Branch Continuity of Operations (COOP), dated July 26, 1999.
  - e. Title 41 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Section 101.20.103-4, Occupant Emergency Program, revised as of July 1, 2000.
  - f. Title 36 CFR, Part 1236, Management of Vital Records, revised as of July 1, 2000.
5. **POLICY.** It is the policy of the United States to have in place a comprehensive and effective program to ensure continuity of essential Federal functions under all circumstances. As a baseline of preparedness for the full range of potential emergencies, all Federal agencies shall have in place a viable COOP capability, which ensures the performance of their essential functions during any emergency or situation that may disrupt normal operations. Inherent in this policy is a requirement for all Federal agencies to designate alternate operating facilities as part of their COOP planning responsibilities.
6. **BACKGROUND.** The changing threat environment and recent emergencies have focused awareness on the need for COOP capabilities that enable agencies to continue their essential functions during a broad spectrum of emergencies. Also, the potential for terrorist use of weapons of mass destruction has emphasized the need to provide the President the ability to ensure continuity of essential government functions across the Federal Executive Branch.

To provide a focal point to orchestrate this expanded effort, PDD 67 established the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as the Executive Agent for Federal Executive Branch COOP. Inherent in this role is FEMA's responsibility to formulate guidance for agencies to use in developing viable, executable COOP plans; facilitate interagency coordination; and oversee and assess the status of COOP capability across the Federal Executive Branch.

On July 26, 1999, FEMA published FPC 65 to provide COOP guidance to the Federal Executive Branch. In accordance with PDD 67, FPC 65 required all agencies to designate alternate operating facilities as part of their COOP plans and prepare their personnel for the possibility of unannounced relocation of essential functions and/or COOP contingency staffs to these facilities should an emergency necessitate that action. FPC 65 advised that these facilities could be identified from existing agency local or field infrastructures or external sources, and should be capable of supporting emergency operations in a secure environment, as determined by the geographical location of the facility, a favorable assessment of the local threat, and/or the collective protection characteristics of the facility.

7. **OBJECTIVES.** The essence of COOP planning is to assure that the capability exists to continue essential agency functions across a wide range of potential emergencies. An integral part of COOP planning is securing an alternate facility(ies) from which to continue essential agency functions should the primary facility be rendered unusable. The objectives for acquiring an alternate facility include:
- a. Ensuring that agencies have a facility from which to continue to perform their essential functions/operations during an emergency;
  - b. Reducing or mitigating disruptions to operations;
  - c. Achieving a timely and orderly recovery from an emergency and resuming full service to customers.
8. **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS.** The following guidance is provided for the identification and preparation of alternate facilities for relocated operations.
- a. **Location of facilities.** Organizations should perform a risk analysis of their current operating facility and consider all possible scenarios that could require a COOP relocation (e.g., fire, flood, potential threat of terrorism, tactical attack on Washington, DC). Alternate facilities should be located in an area where the ability to initiate, maintain, and terminate operations is not disrupted. Maximum use should be made of existing field infrastructures and consideration should be given to other options, such as telecommuting locations, work-at-home, virtual offices, and joint or shared facilities. Additionally, decisions concerning alternate facility locations should take into consideration the following:
    - (1) The ability to be operational not later than 12 hours after activation and to sustain operations for up to 30 days;
    - (2) The distance from the threat area of any other facilities/locations (e.g., hazardous materials/nuclear power plants, areas subject to natural disasters or civil unrest);
    - (3) Access to essential resources such as food, water, fuel, medical facilities, and municipal services (e.g., fire, police); and
    - (4) The availability of surface and/or air transportation.
  - b. **Construction.** Since the alternate facility will be located at a sufficient distance from the affected facility and in an area reasonably free from other risks, no specific construction requirements are identified. At a minimum, the facility should be constructed such that it is not uniquely susceptible to natural disaster risk factors (e.g., earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, etc.).
  - c. **Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)/Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).** If the facility is not owned or leased by the organization, an MOA/MOU should be established with the owner or occupant of the facility. If General Services

Administration (GSA) is to provide relocation sites, an MOA/MOU must be established with GSA. MOA/MOUs should include the following:

- (1) Time period from notification of requirement to availability of facility for occupancy;
  - (2) Space and services to be provided; and
  - (3) Sole use of allocated space during the period of occupancy.
- c. Space. Sufficient space should be available for relocated staff; contiguous space is desirable, however, non-contiguous space might be acceptable if adequate communications are in place to ensure effective operations of the relocated organization.
  - d. Billeting. If the alternate facilities are located at a distance from the primary site, plans should be developed to address housing for emergency staff (e.g., billeting within facility, local motels).
  - e. Site Transportation. Transportation resource requirements, if any, should be met at the relocation sites (e.g., buses, automobiles).
  - f. Communications. Communications should be provided in sufficient quantity and mode/media to effectively interface with other organizational elements (e.g., regional offices), other departments and agencies, and other government and private sector organizations (including key operations centers) critical to the performance of organization mission essential functions. Secure/nonsecure communication requirements should be incorporated as required.
  - g. Security. Sufficient personnel should be designated to provide perimeter, access, and internal security functions as required by organization policy and operations.
  - h. Life Support. Most life support items should be available from external sources (e.g., food, water, medical services, sanitation, power); however, if not, they need to be contained in the facility in sufficient quantities for the anticipated duration of operations. In addition, items such as unique medical supplies, medical records and housekeeping supplies should be brought to the facility with the relocated personnel or maintained in the facility.
9. **THE ACQUISITION PROCESS**. The alternate facilities acquisition process can vary depending on the organization, its requirements, and its mission. The term alternate facility can include anything from a borrowed conference room for a few key people on a temporary basis, to a complete turn-key facility to house the entire organization. The size and scope of the alternate facility is dependent upon the individual agency, its identified essential functions, and its available budget. Facility requirements, selection and occupancy planning should include provisions for a worst case scenario.

The alternate facility acquisition process consists, at a minimum, of three steps: Alternate Facilities Requirements Identification; Candidate Alternate Facilities Selection and Acquisition; and Alternate Facility Reevaluation.

a. Alternate Facilities Requirements Identification. During this step, an agency should address what type and size of facility is needed to carry out its minimum essential functions. To help with this process, GSA has developed a questionnaire. A copy of this questionnaire may be obtained by contacting the Emergency Coordinator in the Emergency Management Office, General Services Administration, 1800 F Street, NW, Room B-39, Washington, D.C., 20405. At a minimum, the following questions should be addressed:

- (1) What are the minimum essential functions necessary to keep the agency operational for 30 days or until the emergency ends?
- (2) How many personnel per shift will be required to accomplish these functions for 30 days or until the emergency ends?
- (3) What is the minimum amount of space these employees need to accomplish their functions under emergency conditions?
- (4) Will all emergency personnel be needed at the alternate facility from the start of the emergency, or can they be time-phased in their arrival?
- (5) How will personnel travel to the alternate facility?
- (6) What are the power and communications requirements for the facility?
- (7) What are the equipment and furniture requirements for the facility?

b. Candidate Alternate Facilities Selection and Acquisition. In this step, an agency should consider any and all possibilities for identifying and obtaining an alternate facility. Some of these options are as follows:

- (1) Existing Agency Space.
  - (a) Remote/Offsite Training Facilities. This could be an agency training facility that is located nearby, but far enough away to provide for geographical dispersion;
  - (b) Regional or Field Offices. Some agencies may have a Regional Office or a Field Office nearby that could operate as an alternate facility; and
  - (c) Remote Headquarters Operations. Some agency headquarters are of such size that their operations and facilities extend beyond the Washington, D.C., city limits. One of these locations could act as an alternate facility.

(2) Virtual Offices.

- (a) Work at Home. Several agencies have programs to allow employees to work from home. This arrangement could be utilized for some employees to fulfill their mission-essential functions;
- (b) Telecommuting Facilities. Several areas of the country have federally fund telecommuting facilities. These facilities could accommodate some personnel on a prearranged reimbursable basis so that they can fulfill their mission-essential functions; and
- (c) Mobile Office Concept. This concept envisions using such assets as a specially equipped vehicle that can serve as an office, or laptop computers that communicate via cellular or satellite technology.

(3) MOA/MOU For Co-Location With Another Agency. These are arrangements where one agency relocates to another agency's facilities. The relocating agency could occupy available space in the other agencies headquarters, training facility, field office, or other available agency space.

(4) Acquisition of An Agency Specific Alternate Facility.

- (a) Agency Procured and Maintained Space. For this option, the agencies that have authority to procure their own space may do so to meet their alternate facility requirements;
- (b) GSA Procured and Maintained Space. An agency could request GSA to assign Federally owned or leased space to accommodate their alternate facility needs; and

(5) Another Agency Procured and Maintained Space. Some agencies (other than GSA) offer space procurement services that could be used by agencies to fulfill their needs for an alternate facility.

(6) Participation in a Joint-Use Alternate Facility.

- (a) Single-Use Total Space, Multi-Use Limited Space. Several agencies could pool their resources to acquire space for an alternate facility. If a COOP incident occurred, the affected agency would relocate to the facility. However, if the incident affected several or all of the agencies, there might not be sufficient space available to accommodate all;
- (b) Multiple Agencies, Individual Spaces. An agency could decide to co-locate with another agency (ies), but each would have individually designated space to meet their alternate facility needs; and

(c) Multiple Uses (COOP/Telecommute/Training). An agency could acquire an alternate facility, but ordinarily use it for purposes other than COOP. For instance, an agency could use the facility as a remote telecommuting facility or as a remote training facility.

c. Alternate Facility Reevaluation. Any alternate facility identified must be reevaluated periodically for suitability and functionality. This is recommended whenever the agency's COOP is reviewed and updated to ensure that the alternate facility still meets the needs as determined by the agency's plan.

**10. THE REPORTING PROCESS.** As directed in PDD-67, a central database of all alternate facilities will be created and maintained. GSA has been tasked with creating and maintaining this database. All agencies are required to identify an alternate facility and provide the necessary data concerning the facility to GSA. To facilitate the reporting process, GSA has developed an information sheet. To obtain a copy of this information sheet, please contact the Emergency Coordinator in the Emergency Management Office, General Services Administration. The information sheet should be completed and returned to this GSA office.

**11. RESPONSIBILITIES.**

a. Each agency is responsible for:

- (1) Designating alternate operating facilities as part of its COOP plan;
- (2) Acquiring and equipping such facilities to include, at a minimum, food, billeting, communications and transportation. Agencies are encouraged to consider cooperative interagency agreements and to share alternate facilities;
- (3) Submitting facility information to GSA as required under paragraph 10 above;
- (4) Notifying GSA when an alternate facility is relinquished;
- (5) Submitting to GSA the names and titles of those individuals who may be contacted concerning the agency's facility; and
- (6) Developing and implementing a multi-year strategy and management plan (i.e., budgeting plan) to acquire, equip, maintain, and improve/modernize the facility.

b. In addition to the above, GSA is responsible for:

- (1) In cooperation with FEMA, developing and implementing a plan to ensure all agencies identify alternate facilities in support of COOP;
- (2) Creating and maintaining a database of these facilities; and

(3) Coordinating with FEMA to maintain and revise this FPC as required.

c. In addition to the above, FEMA is responsible for in cooperation with GSA, issuing COOP guidance to promote understanding of, and compliance with, the requirements and objectives of PDD 67.

**12. DISTRIBUTION:** This FPC is distributed to the heads of Federal departments and agencies, senior policy officials, emergency planners, and other interested parties.

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Joe M. Allbaugh  
Director